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December 23, 2019

To: Supervisor Kathryn Barger, Chair
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From: Sachi A. Hamai 
Chief Executive Officer

EMPLOYMENT INNOVATIONS TO LINK HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS TO JOBS (ITEM NO. 8, AGENDA OF APRIL 9, 2019)

On April 9, 2019, the Board of Supervisors (Board) directed the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to identify regional clusters (Clusters) based on overlapping boundaries for General Relief (GR), CalWORKs, Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN), Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) and America's Job Centers of California (AJCC), homeless services providers and Community Colleges/Adult Schools to refine and implement recommendations from the Employment and Homelessness Taskforce (EHT) and report back in 60 days on the feasibility of scaling piloted recommendations Countywide. An extension was subsequently granted, allowing for a report back in eight months. This memorandum provides an interim report back on implementation efforts thus far and the feasibility of scaling the piloted recommendations.

Regional Clusters

In January 2019, the EHT, comprised of representatives from the CEO; Department of Public Social Services (DPSS); Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services (WDACS); and the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), presented a set of recommendations to the Homeless Policy Board Deputies. These recommendations aim to establish systems changes that will increase the number of people experiencing homelessness who secure and retain employment. The EHT subsequently presented an Action Plan to the Homeless Policy Board Deputies, including a plan to divide the County into 14 Clusters, which align with the GR program boundaries and include homeless services providers, AJCC's, Community Colleges/Adult Schools, and other entities serving homeless job seekers within those boundaries. Two of those Clusters were selected for initial implementation of many of the EHT recommendations: a cluster in the

Eastern San Gabriel Valley (within the Pomona GR boundaries) and a cluster within South Los Angeles (within the South Central GR boundaries).

Since September 2019, consultants from the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) and its subcontractor, Heartland Alliance (HA), have convened multiple meetings of service providers within the two Clusters to begin implementing the EHT recommendations. Within the Clusters, these convenings have yielded several important outcomes, including:

- Through a collaboration with the Chief Information Office, system maps were created for each cluster, visualizing the relationship between the participating agencies (from the homeless, public benefits, workforce, and education systems) and helping these agencies to identify opportunities to enhance collaboration, referrals, and information/resource sharing.
- Cluster meeting participants received information – and shared their own knowledge – about evidence-based employment models for people experiencing homelessness and barriers to employment. In addition, participants in the cluster meetings provided input and feedback on the types of trainings that would be most useful to them in order to better serve homeless job seekers. A schedule of trainings is under development by CSH and HA.
- Two program managers have been hired through funding provided to the United Way of Greater Los Angeles (United Way) by the County. One program manager has been assigned to each cluster to assist with local implementation and coordination.
- Cluster participants have provided input on appropriate uses of flexible cash assistance, which has contributed to the development of a program design for the implementation of flexible funding to support homeless jobseekers to secure and retain employment.

Scaling Piloted Recommendations Countywide

Although considerable progress has been made in the Clusters, the CEO believes it is too early to assess the feasibility of scaling all aspects of the pilots Countywide. However, there are two piloted (or soon-to-be piloted) recommendations that are well-positioned to move toward Countywide implementation in the near future:

Employment-Related Assessment Questions

The EHT's pursuit of employment-related assessment questions is fortuitously timed with broader efforts within the homeless services system to reform the assessment process. LAHSA has developed an Initial Access Tool (IAT) which will help to triage participants into appropriate pathways when they first encounter the system. This brief intake tool is currently under review and includes proposed questions related to employment, as recommended by EHT. Should these proposed questions be included in the final version, they will enable LAHSA to gather data on the employment needs and service preferences of participants at

their initial contact with the homeless services system. Since many of these participants may never be connected to scarce housing subsidies, employment is a central means for them to be able to afford housing; the inclusion of employment questions in the IAT helps to ensure that employment is central to conversations with participants regarding how to resolve their housing crisis.

Flexible Funding for Homeless Job Seekers

The EHT is optimistic about the prospects for scaling flexible funding for homeless job seekers Countywide in Fiscal Year 2020-21. LAHSA has recently established an infrastructure for the implementation of its problem-solving assistance fund, which provides flexible funds to help participants overcome obstacles to resolving their housing crisis without entering the homeless services system. Over the coming months, LAHSA and the EHT will consider how learnings from the implementation of the problem-solving assistance fund can be applied to implementation of a similar, employment-focused flexible funding program, to enable participants to quickly attain or retain employment. Further, the EHT will draw on learnings from the use of flex funds in the three "100-day challenges" described below to scale the program Countywide.

100-Day Challenges

To further drive implementation of the EHT recommendations, the CEO is pursuing the opportunity to launch 100-day challenges in the two pilot Clusters by the beginning of March 2020. This will be part of a statewide effort initiated by Governor Newsom's office, which will support the launch of multiple 100-day challenges related to combatting homelessness in counties across California. A 100-day challenge to place Rapid Re-Housing participants into employment is currently underway in Service Planning Area (SPA) 4, and is funded by Measure H as a part of the Employment Innovations Fund administered by United Way. The Governor has urged Counties to utilize part of their Homeless Housing and Prevention (HHAP) grants to fund the challenges; in turn, the State will contribute some of its HHAP administrative funds toward a technical assistance provider.

These challenges bring together key stakeholders to realize critical, challenging goals by engaging in collaborative, innovative, and rapid efforts. The County's challenges will be led by Rapid Results Institute (RRI), a non-profit organization that pioneered the 100-day challenge model and has worked on homelessness-related 100-day Challenges in more than 100 U.S. communities, including as a part of efforts to develop the Coordinated Entry System (CES) and to address youth homelessness in the County.

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The focus of the challenges in the two Clusters will be to place a specific number of homeless job seekers into employment and support retention of employment going forward. Because of the timing of these challenges, the Clusters will have the opportunity to benefit from learnings from the SPA 4 challenge, which will be almost complete by the time the cluster challenges launch. Through these challenges, the CEO will gain further insight into best practices for implementing the EHT recommendations Countywide.

After the completion of the 100-day challenges – and once the EHT has further experience in implementing recommendations in the Clusters – the CEO will report back to the Board to further assess the feasibility of scaling the recommendations. This report back will be submitted by June 30, 2020.

If you have any questions, please contact Phil Ansell, Homeless Initiative Director, at (213) 974-1752 or pansell@ceo.lacounty.gov.

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- County Counsel
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- Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services
- Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority
- United Way of Greater Los Angeles